



Reference No. 6.24

TRADE UNION STATISTICS : AUSTRALIA  
DECEMBER 1974

MAIN FEATURES

The annual trade union collection at the end of 1974 showed -

- The number of reporting unions was 286 (294 in 1973).
- Total membership was 2,773,600 persons (1,975,300 males and 798,300 females).
- Increases in membership over 1973 were:
  - Males 70,400 (3.7 per cent)
  - Females 43,300 (5.7 per cent)
  - Persons 113,700 (4.3 per cent)
- The 10 largest unions had more than 80,000 members each, their total membership of 1,120,800 accounting for 40 per cent of total union membership.
- The 33 smallest unions, all with fewer than 100 members, had average membership of less than 60.
- Trade union members represented 55 per cent of total wage and salary earners in employment (males 61 per cent, females 45 per cent), compared with 54 per cent (males 59 per cent, females 43 per cent) at the end of 1973.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

The figures contained in this annual bulletin have been compiled from data obtained from questionnaires sent to individual trade unions in the annual collection of membership of trade unions as at 31 December 1974. For comparison, figures for some earlier years are also shown. More detailed statistics for earlier years and a description of these series appear in the *Labour Report* (Reference No. 6.7) and the *Official Year Book*.

2. For the purpose of these statistics a trade union is defined as an organisation consisting predominantly of employees and whose principal activities include the negotiation of rates of pay and conditions of employment for its members.

3. Current lists of reporting trade unions are maintained by reference to lists of reporting trade unions used in previous years; by reference to trade unions registered under the provisions of the various Federal and State industrial arbitration Acts, trade union Acts, etc.; from names of unions reported to be engaged in conciliation and arbitration proceedings, etc.; and from reports of trade unions in trade journals, trade union and employer periodicals, newspapers, and other publications. It should be noted that not all reporting trade unions are registered under the relevant Federal or State industrial arbitration legislation or State trade union Acts.

4. The published number of reporting trade unions varies from year to year as a result of amalgamations and mergers of unions; unions ceasing to operate; new unions being formed; existing organisations changing their status such that it brings them within the scope of the definition of a trade union (see paragraph 2); and existing unions reporting for the first time. These variations generally have little or no effect on total membership figures. Between 1973 and 1974 the number of reporting trade unions decreased from 294 to 286. This change was the result of a number of amalgamations or mergers, the effect of which was that 11 unions were reduced to 4 unions, and of one union ceasing to operate.

5. The total membership of the reporting trade unions represents the aggregate of the membership of individual unions; persons who are members of more than one union are therefore counted more than once in the totals. The extent of this duplication is not known and it may vary over time. Total reported membership figures are affected by differences in the concept of membership adopted by various unions or by the same union at different times. Union rules on membership may follow different concepts and practices and this may be reflected in the level and fluctuations of the figures reported. Some unions confine their reported membership to "financial" members whilst others may also include "unfinancial" members. Individual unions may or may not include in their reported membership unemployed members, members who have retired from the work force, disabled members, members with dues in arrears (who may be kept on union books for varying lengths of time), etc. Members of unions working overseas (e.g. in Papua New Guinea) are excluded from the reported membership data.



6. Membership of trade unions is shown separately for males and females for each State and Territory. The subdivision of total membership into males and females is not precise because some trade unions are unable to state the exact number of males and females among their members. The subdivision of total membership by States and Territories is also not precise because some unions in the Territories are affiliated with State organisations and their membership is reported under the heading of that State. More accurate reporting of membership by location by trade unions over the years is reflected in the annual figures for the Territories and this affects their comparability over time.

7. Interstate or federated trade unions are those unions which have members in more than one State. The larger interstate unions are usually administered by both Federal and State executives, the degree of control of the respective executives varying from union to union. The State branches, or in some cases intra-State branches, of such unions may be separately registered under provisions of relevant State industrial arbitration legislation, etc., perhaps under several different names. When obtaining statistics from trade unions operating wholly within one State or district, secretaries are asked to report whether or not the union is a branch of an interstate, or a larger State or district organisation. This reporting reduces the possibility of duplication in the figures of the number of unions and of membership. An interstate or federated trade union is treated as a separate union in each State or Territory in which it has members, but is counted only once in the Australian total (see Table 1).

8. Organisations registered under the federal Conciliation and Arbitration Act. Details of employer and employee organisations registered under this Act as at the end of 1974 are set out below with comparable figures for 1973 shown in brackets. There were 82 (81) employer organisations registered at the end of 1974. The number of employee unions registered was 149 (149), with membership of 2,469,000 (2,266,400) representing 89 (85) per cent of total membership of all reporting trade unions in Australia. For more details of organisations registered under this Act and under State industrial arbitration Acts see the annual *Labour Report*.

9. This bulletin does not contain information on employer and employee organisations registered under State industrial arbitration Acts, etc.; trades and labour councils; central labour organisations such as the Australian Council of Trade Unions, the Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations, the Council of Commonwealth Public Service Organisations (now entitled Council of Australian Government Employee Organisations), and the Council of Professional Associations; and the International Labour Organisation. Information on these is contained in the annual *Labour Report*.

NOTE. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components in tables are due to rounding.

TABLE 1. — TRADE UNIONS : NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP

<i>End of December —</i>	<i>N.S.W.</i>	<i>Vic.</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>S.A.</i>	<i>W.A.</i>	<i>Tas.</i>	<i>N.T. (a)</i>	<i>A.C.T. (a)</i>	<i>Aust.</i>
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS (b)									
1973	192	159	140	135	154	118	58	87	(c)294
1974	191	158	137	135	151	120	65	88	(c)286
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)									
1973 —									
Males	735.8	484.7	254.2	181.6	142.6	62.5	10.2	33.3	1,904.9
Females	296.2	196.8	107.9	60.2	54.8	21.6	3.2	14.2	755.0
Persons	1,032.0	681.6	362.1	241.8	197.4	84.1	13.5	47.5	2,659.9
1974 —									
Males	752.5	501.1	264.5	189.4	153.0	67.1	12.1	35.5	1,975.3
Females	307.2	210.5	110.6	63.4	63.4	22.0	4.3	17.0	798.3
Persons	1,059.7	711.6	375.1	252.8	216.4	89.1	16.4	52.5	2,773.6

(a) See paragraph 6, page 2. (b) See paragraph 4, page 1. (c) Without interstate duplication. See paragraph 7, page 2.

Proportion of total employed wage and salary earners. Tables 2 and 3 below show the approximate percentages of wage and salary earners in employment who were members of trade unions. The estimates of total wage and salary earners have been derived by adding figures for employees in rural industries and in private domestic service recorded at the 1966 Population Census to the estimates of employees in all other industries as at the end of each year. The percentages shown in these tables are not directly comparable with those shown in *Labour Report* No. 53, 1967 and earlier issues of the *Labour Report*, because the present percentages are based on a revised series of employment estimates available only as from June 1966. The percentages shown in Tables 2 and 3 should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the extent of union membership amongst wage and salary earners because they are based on estimates of *employed* wage and salary earners that are subject to revision. The degree of unemployment amongst reported union members would affect the percentages for a particular year and comparisons over time.

TABLE 2. — TRADE UNIONS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYED WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS, DECEMBER 1974

<i>State</i>	<i>Number of members ( '000 )</i>			<i>Proportion of total employed wage and salary earners (per cent)</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
New South Wales and A.C.T.	788.0	324.2	1,112.2	65	48	59
Victoria	501.1	210.5	711.6	57	42	52
Queensland	264.5	110.6	375.1	58	48	55
South Australia	189.4	63.4	252.8	63	38	54
Western Australia	153.0	63.4	216.4	61	46	55
Tasmania	67.1	22.0	89.1	69	48	62
Northern Territory	12.1	4.3	16.4	47	31	42
Australia	1,975.3	798.3	2,773.6	61	45	55

TABLE 3. — TRADE UNIONS : PROPORTION OF TOTAL EMPLOYED WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS, AUSTRALIA

<i>End of December —</i>	<i>Number of members ( '000 )</i>			<i>Proportion of total employed wage and salary earners (per cent)</i>		
	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Persons</i>
1966	1,657.5	466.0	2,123.5	60	37	53
1967	1,663.7	487.6	2,151.3	59	37	52
1968	1,691.1	499.5	2,190.7	59	36	51
1969	1,717.5	521.6	2,239.1	58	36	50
1970	1,750.6	564.1	2,314.6	57	36	50
1971	1,818.2	618.3	2,436.6	59	39	52
1972	1,827.4	696.2	2,523.7	58	43	53
1973	1,904.9	755.0	2,659.9	59	43	54
1974	1,975.3	798.3	2,773.6	61	45	55



NA

N<sup>9</sup>  
331.880994  
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TABLE 4. — TRADE UNIONS : CLASSIFICATION ACCORDING TO NUMBER OF MEMBERS, AUSTRALIA

Number of members	Number of separate unions (a)				Number of members ('000)				Percent of total members Dec. 1974
	Dec. 1971	Dec. 1972	Dec. 1973	Dec. 1974	Dec. 1971	Dec. 1972	Dec. 1973	Dec. 1974	
Under 100	39	42	35	33	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9	0.2
100 and under 250	40	42	34	26	6.9	7.1	5.6	4.3	0.5
250 " " 500	33	36	34	39	12.1	13.6	12.4	14.1	0.5
500 " " 1,000	38	38	37	38	26.9	28.2	26.0	26.9	1.0
1,000 " " 2,000	42	37	45	39	60.9	52.6	63.0	55.5	2.0
2,000 " " 5,000	45	45	41	39	149.8	148.3	135.4	123.2	4.4
5,000 " " 10,000	12	12	16	22	85.8	85.2	116.7	179.0	6.5
10,000 " " 20,000	17	16	15	14	238.6	216.1	212.8	190.2	6.9
20,000 " " 30,000	11	12	11	9	255.7	279.9	272.8	226.2	8.2
30,000 " " 40,000	7	4	3	4	254.6	140.1	107.6	139.2	5.0
40,000 " " 50,000	5	7	8	7	217.6	303.9	350.7	315.3	11.4
50,000 " " 80,000	7	6	5	6	468.6	400.3	307.4	377.1	13.6
80,000 and over	7	8	10	10	657.0	846.5	1,047.7	1,120.8	40.4
Total	303	305	294	286	2,436.6	2,523.7	2,659.9	2,773.6	100.0

(a) See paragraph 4, page 1.

TABLE 5. — INTERSTATE OR FEDERATED TRADE UNIONS, AUSTRALIA

Unions operating in (a) —						
End of December —	2 States	3 States	4 States	5 States	6 States	Total
NUMBER OF SEPARATE UNIONS (b)						
1970	11	7	17	27	85	147
1971	12	6	16	32	81	147
1972	10	5	17	29	79	140
1973	10	7	14	27	86	144
1974	8	7	14	27	92	142
NUMBER OF MEMBERS ('000)						
1970	21.8	23.9	97.1	382.6	1,595.4	2,120.8
1971	24.3	21.0	104.2	425.9	1,660.5	2,235.9
1972	22.0	62.4	96.7	339.0	1,803.0	2,323.1
1973	50.6	64.6	101.5	327.7	1,937.1	2,481.4
1974	17.2	98.9	103.9	202.8	2,183.2	2,606.0

(a) Certain unions have, in addition to branches in the States, branches in the Northern Territory and in the Australian Capital Territory. See paragraph 7, page 2. (b) See paragraph 4, page 1.

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NOTE. Inquiries concerning these statistics may be made in Canberra by telephoning Mr G. Laurie on 63 9111 extension 2343 or, in each State capital, by telephoning the office of the Australian Bureau of Statistics.